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12 May 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Information Systems Board Members

FROM : Executive Director

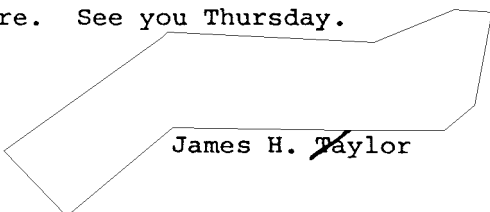
SUBJECT : Future Directions

1. The Information Systems Board first met almost three years ago. A lot has happened in that three years--most of it initiated by the Board. Most importantly, we have embraced a new philosophy of managing information technology. Far-reaching decisions are now brought to the attention of senior Agency managers--yourselves included--for discussion, debate and resolution. As a result, we have decided:

- to move toward a decentralized architecture--computers on every desk,
- to rely on industry standards wherever possible,
- to support a long-term investment program in computer security,
- to create an executive information/decision support system, and
- to build enough flexibility into our systems that we can more easily take advantage of new technology in the future.

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2. While much important work has been done, many of the decisions that have been made so far are near-term and tactical rather than long-range and strategic. At the meeting on Thursday, May 15 (Room 6D49), I would like us to spend some time discussing future information technology directions for the Agency in general and for the Board in particular. Attached is a strawman agenda for the next year, included for the purpose of provoking discussion. I want to know what you think the strategic information technology issues are, where you think your directorate should be in five years, and how you think the Board can help get us there. See you Thursday.


James H. ~~Taylor~~

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INFORMATION SYSTEMS BOARD

Suggested Agenda 1986 - 87

OLD BUSINESS - The Board will continue to monitor several continuing issues:

- Standards: OIT will brief the Board regularly on the progress of the Customer Standards Group in determining hardware, software and service standards for the Agency and deadlines for compliance with these standards. One meeting will be devoted to a discussion of the implications for the Agency of moving from stand-alone word processing equipment to personal computers.
- Computer Security - The Board will monitor the progress of the network and personal computer security programs initiated by its Security Investment Strategy. If the strategy needs updating, the Computer Security Working Group will be reconstituted for that purpose.
- Information Sharing: The DO has requested that the data sharing policy prepared two years ago by the Computer Security Working Group be updated and submitted to the Community for ratification. They further suggest that the Board adopt security guidelines for all systems containing DO information. An inter-directorate Task Force will be established and will report its recommendations to the Board by September.
- Corporate Data Program: OIT/MISG will brief the Board on OIT's program to upgrade and expand personnel, logistics, financial, budget and other corporate databases and the executive information and decision support tools that will be available to senior Agency managers. The DDA will be asked to join the Board for a discussion of the organizational implications of the new corporate database capabilities.
- Advanced Concepts - Three Board meetings will be devoted to briefings by ORD and others on advanced concepts in hardware, software, architecture and communications technology and the implications of these for our business.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS - Where do we want to be five years hence in:

- Function: Four meetings -- one per directorate -- will discuss the data processing and communications tools each directorate foresees needing in five years to do its job better and those previously manual functions that are priority candidates for automation.
- Enhanced Security: OS, OC, OIT, and DO/IMS will jointly brief the Board on ways in which new information technology can be used to improve security procedures and practices beyond current levels.
- Communications: OC and OIT will jointly brief the Board on future communications requirements including which Agency components will need to communicate with which systems in the future and what types of information will be communicated -- text, voice, imagery, video.
- Architecture: OIT will brief the Board on its long range architectural direction including the role of the mainframe vs. workstations in cooperative processing, the uses of departmental systems, local area network and local storage options.
- Investment Strategy: O/Compt will lead a discussion on the Agency's information technology priorities and funding options for the next five years.
- Organization: OIT, ASG, IMS and a DS&T representative will brief the Board on the options for most effectively dividing the labor and responsibility of managing information technology in the future.
- Summary: After the Board has covered these issues, one meeting will be taken to discuss the organizational implications and options of the Agency's strategic directions and the future role of the ISB.